

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 IO-10 ISO-00 SAB-01 SAM-01 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9137
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 11533

GENEVA FOR MEPC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IS, FR, XF, EEC
SUBJECT: ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO FRANCE

REF: TEL AVIV 2536 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: QUAI FOUND THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER "IN-
TRANSIGENT". WHILE PERHAPS IMPROVING THE CLIMATE,
ALLON'S VISIT WILL NOT CHANGE THE SUBSTANCE OF FRENCH
POLICY TO ISRAEL. END SUMMARY

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1. ON MAY 5 QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR THE LEVANT

ROUILLON GAVE US READ-OUT OF ALLON'S DISCUSSIONS WITH SAUVAGNARGUES DURING ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO PARIS APRIL 28-30, FOLLOWED BY TWO DAYS OF "PRIVATE" ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTED BY A DINNER FOR 750 "FRIENDS OF ISRAEL" AND A TOUR OF THE LOIRE CHATEAUX. ROUILLON SAID CONVERSATIONS CENTERED ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE AND DESCRIBED ALLON'S ATTITUDE, AT LEAST IN TALKS WITH SAUVAGNARGUES, AS "COMPLETELY CLOSED". (HE ADMITTED THAT ALLON MAY HAVE SHOWN MORE FLEXIBILITY IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH GISCARD AND CHIRAC BUT SAID THAT AS NO MEMCONS HAD BEEN PREPARED BY THE PRESIDENT OR PM, QUAI EVALUATION OF VISIT WAS BASED ON ALLON'S "ALMOST TOTAL INTRANSIGENCE" WITH SAUVAGNARGUES.)

2. ON PROCEDURE, ALLON LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT ISRAEL STILL PREFERS THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH BUT WOULD BE WILLING TO GO TO GENEVA -- IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PLO AND PROVIDED THAT THE MEPC WOULD SERVE ONLY TO RATIFY PARTIAL STEPS ALREADY AGREED TO BY ISRAEL AND EGYPT OR ISRAEL AND TWO OR MORE ARAB STATES. ALLON STRESSED THAT GENEVA CANNOT BE USED FOR "COLLECTIVE BARGAINING". HE HINTED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT MIGHT BE TAKEN UP AGAIN AT THE POINT REACHED WHEN THE SECRETARY'S LAST SHUTTLE COLLAPSED, A FAILURE ALLON ATTRIBUTED ENTIRELY TO THE EGYPTIANS. IN SUCH CASE, ISRAEL WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HAVING A CLEARER PICTURE OF EGYPTIAN VIEWS ON THE DURATION OF A SECOND WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT AND ON ENDING THE BOYCOTT AND PROPAGANDA AGAINST ISRAEL. ALLON FURTHER SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT ISRAEL WOULD BE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE AN END OF BELLIGERENCY WITH ALL FOUR OF ITS NEIGHBORS AND, EVENTUALLY, A GLOBAL SETTLEMENT.

3. ROUILLON SAID ALLON MADE IT CLEAR THAT ISRAEL EXCLUDES A TOTAL WITHDRAWAL, THAT OCCUPIED TERRITORY WILL CONTINUE TO BE USED AS A BARGAINING ITEM AND THAT CHANGES FROM THE 1967 FRONTIERS ARE NECESSARY TO AVOID "SUICIDE". THE ONLY EXCEPTION TO TRADITIONALLY INTRANSIGENT ISRAELI DOCTRINE, ROUILLON SAID, WAS ALLON'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE FACT OF A "PALESTIN-CONFIDENTIAL

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IAN IDENTITY" AND THE POSSIBILITY OF INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES WHICH, HOWEVER, HE DESCRIBED AS "ACCESSORY" TO A FINAL SETTLEMENT WHICH SHOULD BE BASED PRIMARILY ON SECURE AND DEFENDABLE BORDERS.

4. SAUVAGNARGUES REITERATED FRANCE'S BELIEF THAT ISRAEL MUST PULL BACK FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORY AND THAT ISRAEL WILL NEVER HAVE SECURITY UNTIL RECOGNIZED

BY ITS INCREASINGLY NUMEROUS AND STRONG ARAB NEIGHBORS
WITHIN AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL
GUARANTEES. ALLON DOGGEDLY REPLIED THAT ISRAEL COULD
NOT COMMIT SUICIDE THROUGH TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL AND
MUST DEPEND ON ITS OWN FORCE FOR ITS SECURITY, ROUILLON
SAID.

5. ROUILLON CLAIMED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MADE
NO DECISIONS ON ISRAELI ARMS REQUESTS WHICH THE FRENCH
ARE STUDYING ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS. HE INTIMATED
THAT THERE WERE DISCUSSIONS AT A LOWER LEVEL. (AN

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ISRAELI JOURNALIST HAS TOLD US FRANCE AGREED TO SELL MILITARY ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT BUT THAT THERE IS STILL SOME PROBLEM WITH FINANCING.)

6. OTHER TOPICS DISCUSSED WERE CSCE, THE EC-ISRAELI AGREEMENT AND THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE. ROUILLON SAID ALLON UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY TO CSCE. HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT THE NEW EC-ISRAELI AGREEMENT WOULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT (MIS EN VIGUEUR) ON JULY 1 EVEN THOUGH, ACCORDING TO ROUILLON, THE DATE FOR SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENT HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED LARGELY BECAUSE OF FRENCH HESITANCY. ALLON INTERPOSED NO OBJECTION TO THE EC-ARAB DIALOGUE SO LONG AS THERE IS ALSO AN "EC-ISRAELI DIALOGUE".

7. BOTH ROUILLON AND ISRAELI SOURCES DESCRIBED THE CLIMATE OF THE VISIT AS QUITE GOOD. IN ESSENCE, EACH SIDE DECIDED TO STATE FRANKLY ITS POSITIONS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT NEITHER WAS LIKELY TO SWAY THE OTHER. ROUILLON COMMENTED THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD EXPECTED A MORE FAVORABLE FRENCH ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEIR THESES WHEN POMPIDOU REPLACED DE GAULLE AND THEN WHEN GISCARD REPLACED POMPIDOU. THEY HAD BEEN MISTAKEN AND HE THOUGHT ISRAEL NOW UNDERSTANDS FRANCE WILL NOT CHANGE ITS MIND. HE DISPARAGED AS MISDIRECTED ISRAELI EFFORTS TO CHANGE FRENCH DOCTRINE BY INCITING PRESSURE GROUPS AND PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST OFFICIAL POLICY.

8. COMMENT: IF ALLON AS INDICATED IN REFTEL THINKS HIS MEDIA EXPOSURE AND MEETINGS WITH FRIENDS OF ISRAEL IN FRANCE WILL OVER A PERIOD OF TIME HAVE A SIGNIFICANTLY POSITIVE EFFECT ON FRENCH GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS ISRAELI VIEWPOINTS, WE THINK HE SERIOUSLY MISJUDGES THE LOCAL SCENE. FRENCH MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY IS BASED ON THE FRENCH ESTABLISHMENT'S LONG-HELD JUDGMENT OF WHERE FRENCH INTERESTS LIE. WITH RARE EXCEPTIONS, AND WE DO NOT THINK THIS IS ONE OF THEM, PUBLIC OPINION HAS BUT A MARGINAL EFFECT ON FRENCH OFFICIAL POLICY. MOREOVER, OUTSIDE EVENTS -- THE INCIDENT AT THE ISRAELI CONSULATE IN JOHANNESBURG AND, ABOVE ALL, THE COMMUNIST TRIUMPH IN INDOCHINA -- SERVED TO DISTRACT FRENCH PUBLIC ATTENTION AND TO MINIMIZE ANY POSSIBLE POSITIVE FALL-OUT FROM THE VISIT.

9. THIS BEING SAID, SEVERAL FRENCH COMMENTARIES HAVE

MENTIONED THE IMPROVED CLIMATE THE VISIT BROUGHT TO FRANCO-ISRAELI RELATIONS. AND DESPITE ROUILLON'S DISDAIN FOR ALLEGED ISRAELI INSENSIBILITY TO ARAB SENTIMENT ("HOW CAN THERE BE ANYTHING BUT ANOTHER WAR IF ISRAEL REALLY BELIEVES THAT IT MADE A CONCESSION BY OFFERING SADAT THE 'RIGHT' OF FREE PASSAGE FOR EGYPTIANS OVER
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THEIR OWN TERRITORY TO THEIR OWN OIL FIELDS?"), THE FRENCH HAVE AGAIN BEEN REMINDED OF THE TOUGHNESS OF ISRAELI POSITIONS AND OF THE NECESSITY TO TAKE THEM INTO ACCOUNT IF FRANCE INTENDS TO PLAY THE ROLE TO WHICH IT ASPIRES IN THE NEAR EAST. THE ISRAELIS, TOO, MAY HAVE ACQUIRED A BETTER APPRECIATION OF THE DEPTH OF SUPPORT FOR ARAB VIEWPOINTS IN A COUNTRY LIKE FRANCE WHERE THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE RETAIN GREAT SYMPATHY FOR ISRAEL.
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